Renters Healthy Home Checklist

2017-2018 Calendar

TRIBAL HEALTHY HOMES NETWORK
Mel Sheldon, a Tulalip Tribal Board Member, supports partnerships that protect those at risk in tribal communities... “When we want to protect our young, our elders, the most vulnerable...It asks us, no, it demands us, that we go into immediate action...that we work with EPA, with HUD, and with all entities to resolve this so we can safeguard the health of our people.” – Mel Sheldon

Emma Medicine White Crow is Chair of the Governors Interagency Council on Health Disparities and respected tribal activist working to reduce health disparities. She and her son have asthma... “This is why I do what I do. Because this is our future and this is the future of Indian Country.” – Emma Medicine White Crow

Marie Zackuse, Chairwoman of the Tulalip Tribes Board of Directors and a longtime tribal leader, is keenly aware of how housing affects health... “There are a lot of issues with respect to mold on our reservation. As a tribal leader, we need to put this issue up on top.” – Marie Zackuse

Dean Henry, a healthy homes champion for the people of Tulalip, is a leading voice for preventing asthma in native children. As a child, Dean developed asthma, while living in a home that had multiple but unknown environmental risks... “I’d hate to have any kid suffer like I suffer. I mean, I live on sprays, I live on pills.” – Dean Henry
How can a house affect your health?

Houses often contain invisible, hidden and odorless hazards. For example, radon, an odorless gas, is the second-leading cause of lung cancer. Mold, often hidden, can cause allergies, asthma attacks and frequent infections. Lead, an unseen component of house dust, affects the intelligence, learning ability and behavior of children. Carbon monoxide, an odorless gas produced by combustion appliances, can kill. What we bring into and use in our houses can also bring dangerous gases and fumes. Examples include burning wet wood, cleaning with strong store-bought products or storing paints and solvents inside the home.

Resource list for further information

- Radon
  
  www.epa.gov/radon
  www.radon.com

- Lead
  
  www.epa.gov/lead
  www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/parents.htm

- Mold
  
  www.cdc.gov/mold/qa.htm
  www.epa.gov/mold

- Weatherization and Energy Efficiency
  
  www.pse.com
  www.buildingperformancecenter.org

Recognition of partners involved in project

This project was developed with support from U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Office of Native American Programs, the Tulalip Tribes, the Tribal Healthy Homes Network, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and FirstPic, Inc. We also thank the tribal professionals from across the country, including from Alaska, who provided valuable feedback.
Outside Your Home

- If severe weather causes damage (including roof, gutters, siding or ice dams), report immediately to prevent water from damaging the home.

Inside Your Home Fixtures and Appliance

- Check for signs of high humidity, such as condensation on windows or mold on ceilings or walls. Always use fans while cooking or showering (leave on for 45 minutes after). No fan? Use windows if possible.
- Temperature below freezing? Watch for pipes that have burst, which can cause flooding. Report immediately.
- Check for mold (behind furniture, in closets and on ceilings). Small amount of mold? Remove with scrub brush and dish soap, and always wear a mask and gloves. (Do not use bleach.) Notify property manager if mold is recurring or covers more than 10 square feet.
- Check the bathroom fans. Properly vented fans should be able to hold a piece of bathroom tissue against the cover when operating. Report if fans do not vent or work.
- Damp dust surfaces weekly (microfiber cloths are effective), as household dust may contain allergens, lead paint chips, chemicals, bacteria and mold spores.
- Use safe products when disinfecting surfaces. Anti-bacterial cleaning and soap products eliminate the good bacteria, that our bodies need to stay healthy. Safe alternatives can be found at: www.webMd.com. In search box type “Best non-toxic ways to clean your home”.

Safety in Your Home

- If your home has a heat pump or a heat recovery ventilator (HRV), ask property manager to have it serviced yearly. Replace or clean filters every three to six months.
- Does your home have a furnace or Toyostove? If yes, ask property manager to have the furnace or Toyostove serviced yearly. Replace or clean filters every three to six months.
- Check woodstove for signs of damage, such as broken seals or gaskets, a loose door or cracked glass. Report immediately.
- Using a portable air purifier? Follow manufacturer’s guidelines and regularly change or clean the filter. Certain models release ozone, a lung irritant. Before buying or using an air purifier, confirm it does not emit ozone (check company website).
- Using a dehumidifier? Empty the collection tank as soon as full. Clean tank and screen with soap and water frequently.
- Use a damp cloth to wipe down the cover and remove built-up dust on any electric baseboard or wall heaters.

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Outside Your Home

☐ Anyone in your home have grass allergies? When spring mowing starts, keep doors and windows closed during mowing to help control allergies.

Inside Your Home

☐ Check operation of windows to ensure they open (fire safety) and close properly, and that they latch securely (child safety). Report any problems.

☐ Take any NON-FLAMMABLE household chemicals (paints, glues) and place in sealed containers out of reach of children. Flammable or toxic products, if unused portion is kept, requires storage in a ventilated space, ideally outside the home.

☐ Check for signs of water leaks, especially under sinks, around toilets and tubs. (Common signs include water spots, peeling paint, buckling floors, and loose caulking.) Report immediately.

☐ Spring cleaning? Save money and protect your family by using non-toxic recipes. Find green cleaning recipes at www.toxicfreefuture.org and search “cleaning”.

☐ Do you have carpet or rugs? Weekly vacuuming keeps hazards out of the air. (Pollens, mold spores, lead dust and even flame retardants are commonly found in carpets.)

☐ Anyone in the home have asthma or allergies? Common triggers include second-hand smoke (tobacco, marijuana, or vaping), woodsmoke, perfumes, pets, and store-bought cleaning products. Learn more at www.lung.org and search “asthma triggers”.

Fixtures and Appliances

☐ Using a portable air purifier? Follow manufacturer’s guidelines and regularly change or clean the filter. Certain models release ozone, a lung irritant. Before buying or using an air purifier, confirm it does not emit ozone (check company website).

☐ Using a swamp cooler? Clean pads regularly and replace annually. Bacteria and mold growth are problems when the units are not maintained.

☐ Using a dehumidifier? Empty the water collection tank as soon as full. Clean tank and screen with soap and water frequently.

Safety in Your Home

☐ Time again to change the batteries in the Smoke Detector and Carbon Monoxide Detector. Press test button to ensure alarm works. If you do not have either, ask your property manager to install one. (Did you know that Carbon Monoxide is odorless and poisoning mimics flu symptoms?)

☐ Ask your property manager whether the detectors in your home have been replaced within the last five years. (Older detectors are more likely to malfunction and some expire.)
Outside Your Home

- Check for loose or broken handrails, stairs or decking. Report any problems to property manager.
- If pesticides and weed killers are used, prevent children and pregnant women from these toxins by asking property manager to use the least toxic products possible. If you must use pesticides, choose safer alternatives found at [www.epa.gov/safepestcontrol](http://www.epa.gov/safepestcontrol).

Inside Your Home

- Damp dust weekly using a non-toxic cleaner and a microfiber cloth. (Most store-bought cleaners contain toxic chemicals.)
- Check for signs of high humidity, such as condensation on windows or mold on ceilings or walls. Always use fans while cooking or showering (leave on for 45 minutes after.) No fan? Use windows if possible. Humid climate? If possible, use a dehumidifier.
- Dust mites thrive in moist and humid environments. Controlling humidity is key to dust mite control. Also, for those with asthma or allergies in your home, cover their pillows and mattresses with dust mite covers.
- Is your home shoe-free? Shoe-free homes have less dirt, including bacteria, germs, and traces of chemicals. If shoes must stay on, use door mats at every door.

Fixtures and Appliances

- Using an air conditioner? Clean the unit every three to six months if it has an air filter, have it serviced yearly.
- Using a swamp cooler? Make sure the pads are clean and replaced yearly. Bacteria and mold growth are problems when the units are not maintained.
- Using a dehumidifier? Empty the water collection tank as soon as full. Clean tank and screen with soap and water regularly.

Safety in Your Home

- Do you have a swimming or wading pool? If so, NEVER leave a child unattended.
- Smoke from wildfires affecting you? Inside your home, use a portable air purifier to reduce smoke and particles. Certain models release ozone, a lung irritant. Before buying or using an air purifier, confirm it does not emit ozone (check company website).
- Check for overloaded electrical outlets. Too many appliances used at the same time can overload the system and lead to outages or fires.

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See peeling paint? Was your home built before 1980? If so, ask property manager to test for lead. Lead poisoning is a known cause of learning disabilities, aggression and behavioral issues. See [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead) or call the National Lead Information Center: 1 (800) 424-LEAD.
Outside Your Home

- Check for rodents, ants, roaches, etc. If signs of infestation are present, report to property manager.
- Check for wear/damage to the chimney, such as rusting/leaning. Report any problems. Ask property manager to have the chimney cleaned at least once a year. Blockages, such as creosote build-up, can send poisonous gases into the home or cause chimney fires.
- Check for leaks, debris or clogs in rain gutters. Report any problems.
- If you burn wood, check that your woodpile is securely covered to keep your firewood dry.

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